THE STATE OF THE GLOBAL EDUCATION CRISIS:

# A PATH TO RECOVERY

A JOINT UNESCO, UNICEF, AND WORLD BANK REPORT

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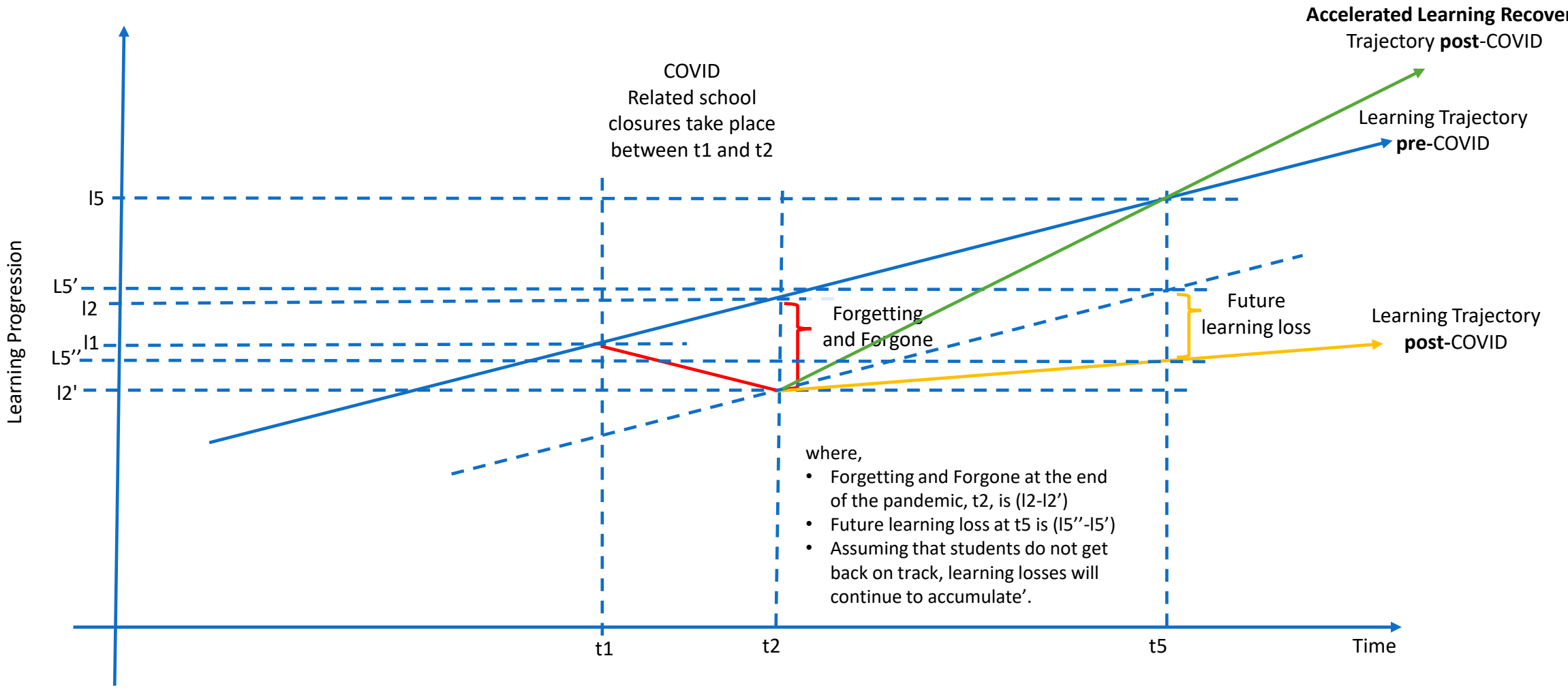
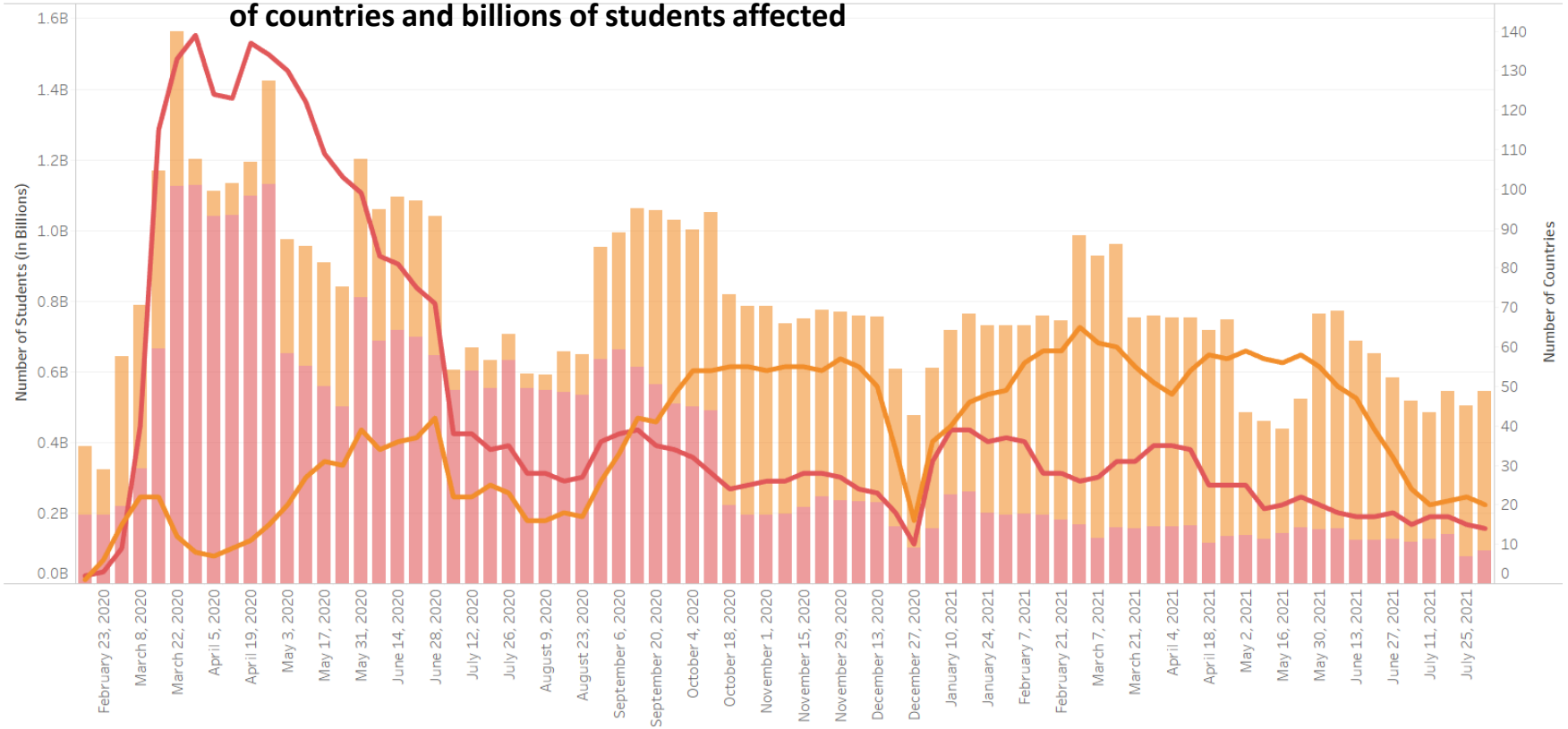
# Without action, future learning is at risk



# School closures have been lengthy

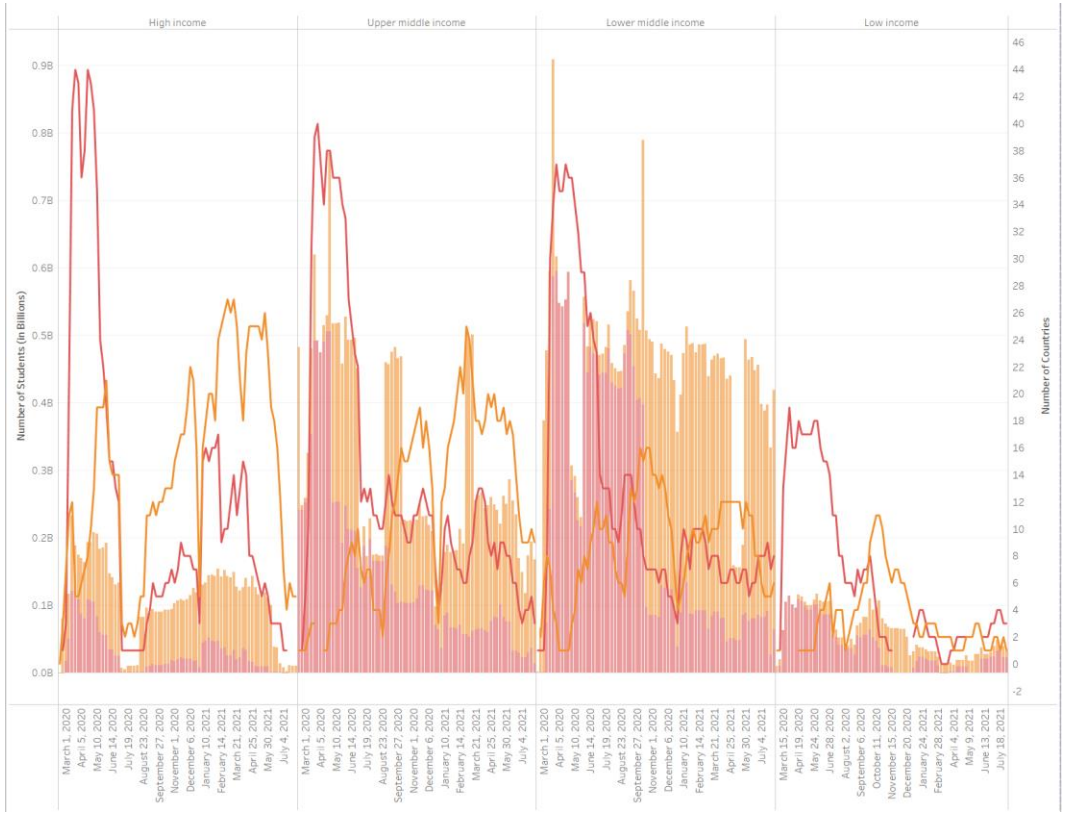
At the peak of school closures, over 1.6 billion children and youth were affected – one billion of them in low-and middle-income countries. Globally, full and partial school closures lasted an average of 224 days.

**Full and partial school closures over time in low- and middle-income countries, number of countries and billions of students affected**

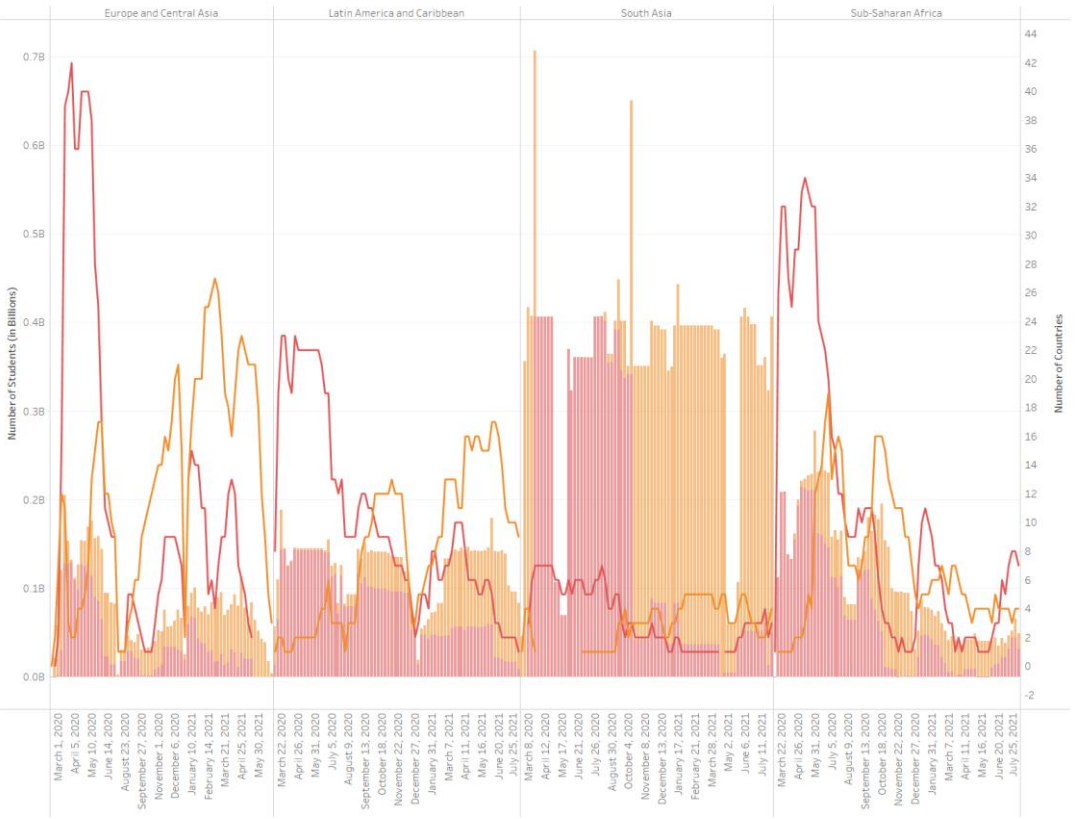


# … and unequal

**High- and low-income** countries have **fewer students in both absolute and relative terms** in either **fully closed or partially open** systems than do middle-income countries.



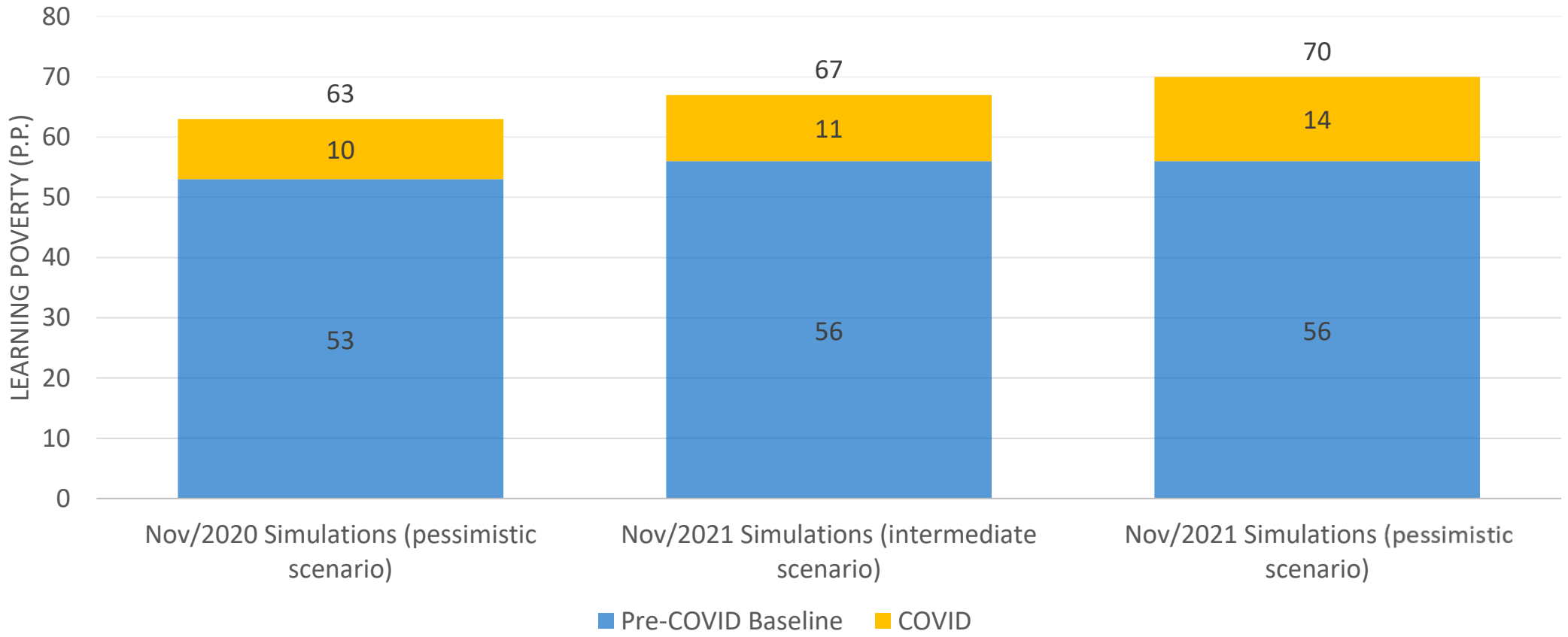

**Latin America and South Asia** have **more students in both absolute and relative terms** in either **fully closed or partially open systems** than do Europe or Sub-Saharan Africa.




Status Scheduled Break Partially Open Fully Closed Fully Open

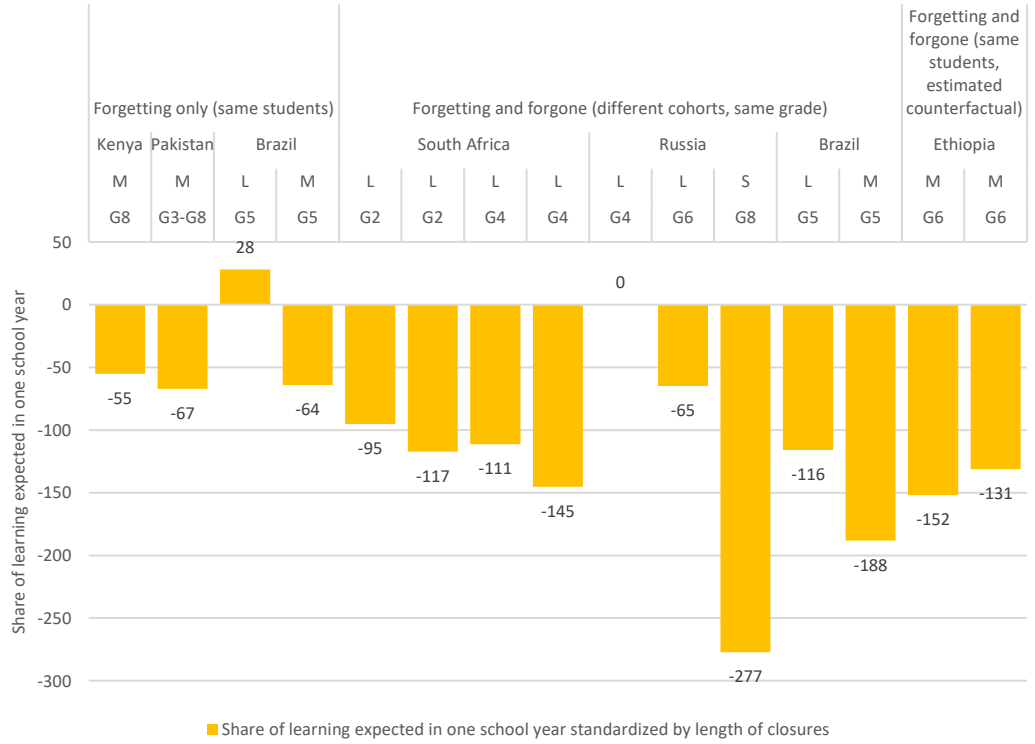
# **Updated simulations** show **Learning Poverty** is likely to **increase** more than **anticipated**

**Learning Poverty**, the share of children who cannot read and understand a simple text by age 10, could reach 70% in low-and middle-income countries.



# Growing evidence from **developed** and **developing** countries show **learning losses are real,** but **heterogenous**

**In selected low- and middle-income countries the average learning loss standardized by the length of the school closure was close to -100%, with a standard deviation of 74.**




**In selected high-income countries the average learning loss standardized by the length of the school closure was close to -43%, with a standard deviation of 30.**


*Notes: (1) "Forgetting" refers to learning that students forgot during school closures, while "forgone" learning refers to learning that would normally take place but did not take place. (2) G refers to grade, and the number denotes which grade. E.g., G2 = grade two; L refers to language, M to math, S to science literacy;*

# The pandemic exacerbated inequality in education

Studies of learning losses confirm that marginalized students often suffered greater losses than their peers.

| Dimension of inequality | Example |
|---|---|
| Geography | **Kenya** (EdTech program participants): Larger losses for students in "hardship" areas; slightly larger losses for rural schools |
| Gender | **South Africa** (three provinces): Learning losses for girls in grade 4 were 20 percent and 27 percent higher than for boys in home language and English reading, respectively |
| Socioeconomic status | **Mexico** (citizen-led assessment, 2 states): Larger learning losses for low-SES students in math and reading |
| Age/grade level | **Brazil** (São Paulo): Larger absolute losses for grade 5 than for grades 9 and 12 in math and Portuguese |
| Public or private schools | **Pakistan** (ASER districts): Children who attend government schools show greater decline in math and reading than private schools between 2019 and 2021 (especially in the younger classes, Classes 1 and 3) |

# The crisis has had detrimental impacts on children and youth beyond learning

24 MILLION additional students may drop out of the school system*

(UNESCO 2020)

370 MILLION children in 150 countries missed out on school meals*

(Borowski et al. 2021)

10 MILLION more girls at risk of early marriage between 2020-2030*

(UNICEF 2021)

17 TRILLION DOLLAR loss in future earnings*

(Azevedo, Cloutier et al. 2021)

100% increase in depression and anxiety symptoms in children globally*

(Racine et al. 2021)

9 MILLION additional children at risk of being pushed into child labor by end of 2022*

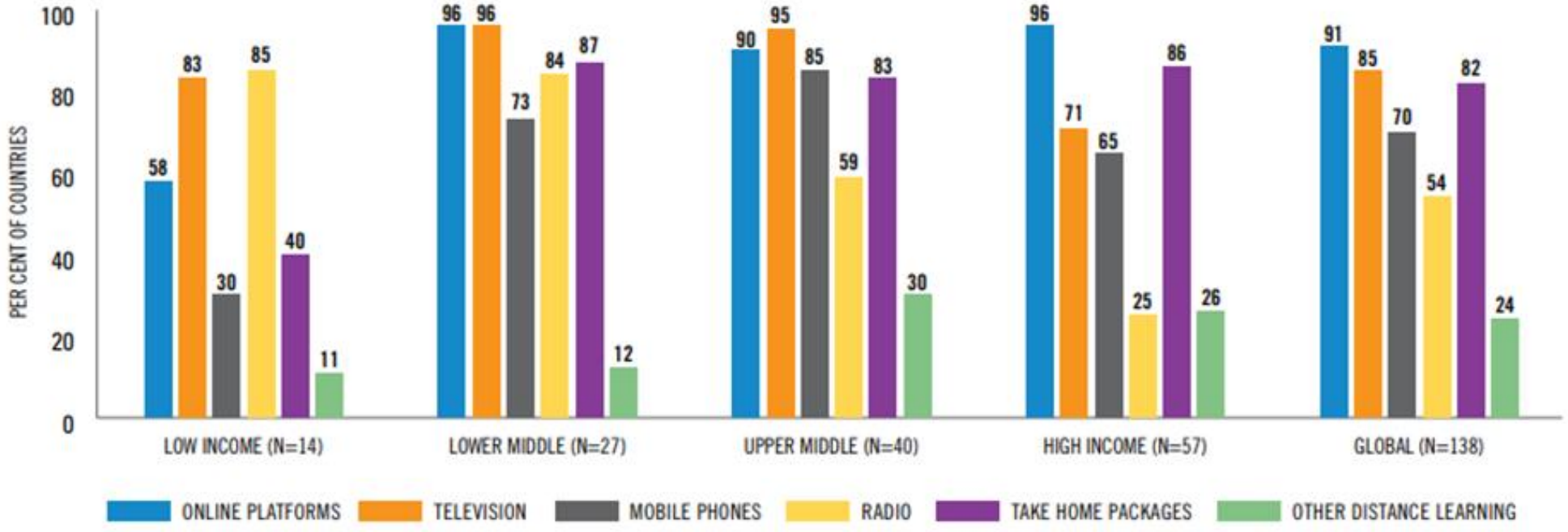
(International Labor Organization and UNICEF)

* estimations

# Nearly all countries offered remote learning

186 countries offered remote learning. The modalities used varied by income level, with higher income countries relying more on online platforms and lower income countries broadcast media, like radio and television.

**Share of survey respondent countries offering a remote learning modality across at least one education level, by income group**




***Note:*** *The chart shows the per cent of countries with valid responses. The y axis shows the per cent of countries in a particular income group that responded as using a particular modality for at least one of the education levels (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary). While the results represented in this Figure covers more than 50 per cent of the global student-aged population, this may not apply to specific income groups. More information on the population coverage of each income group can be found in Annex 1.*

# …but quality, take-up, and effectiveness of remote learning varied

**The digital divide became glaringly evident**

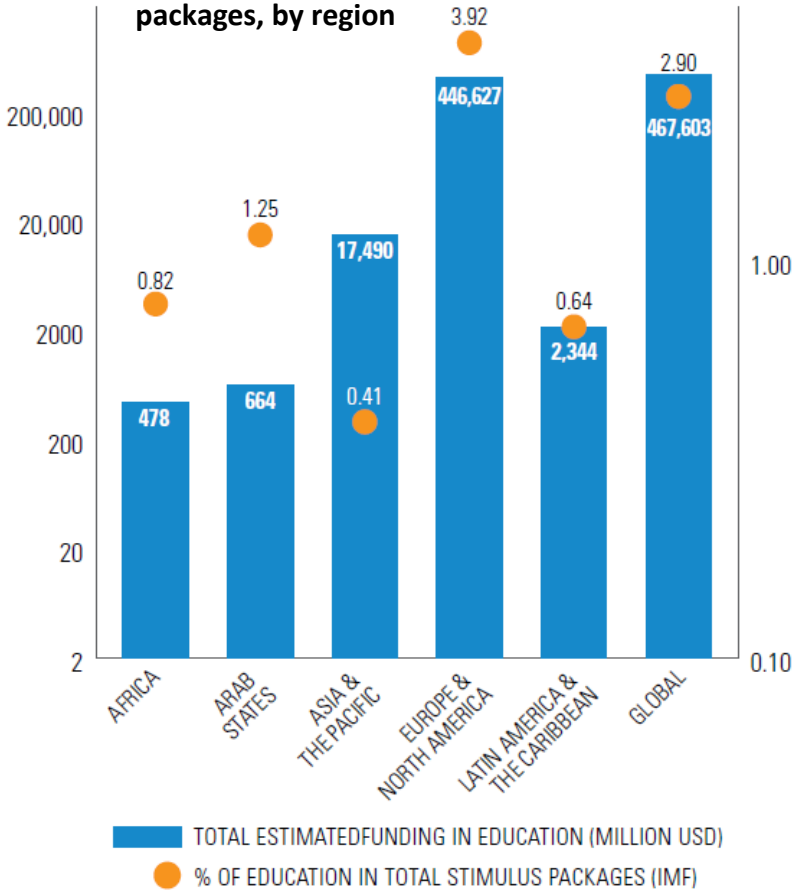
- At least **463 million** children were not reached by digital and broadcast remote learning programs
- **3 out of 4** students not reached came from rural areas and/or poor households
- Lower-income countries had higher shares of students unable to access remote learning than higher-income countries

**Many countries adopted technological solutions ill-suited to their contexts**

- Online platforms were the most common remote learning strategy globally
- Yet 1.3 billion school-age children lack internet access at home
- In sub-Saharan Africa, only 47% of the population has electricity, posing a barrier to technology-enabled learning
- Countries with longer school closures had lower rates of school-aged children with internet connection at home

# Stimulus packages did not prioritize education

**Allocation to education in total COVID-19 stimulus packages, by region**




*Source: UNESCO. 2021. Uneven global education stimulus risks widening learning disparities.*

Countries have deployed massive stimulus packages in response to the health crisis, but **limited resources have been allocated to the education and training sector.**

There were **large regional disparities**: in Africa, Asia, and Latin America & the Caribbean, less than 1% went to education, compared to nearly 4% in Europe and North America.

There were **large disparities by income level**: on average, countries allocated 3% to education; in low- and lower-middle-income countries, that figure is less than 1%.

**Much more funding is needed** for immediate learning recovery, let alone for the transformed education that the world's children and youth deserve and need.

# Adopting a **Learning Recovery Program**

**Countries must measure learning**

**Change**

Useful to identify **learning losses.** understand the potential learning inequalities caused by the pandemic. Complex task, with good learning data from before the pandemic needed.

**Level**

Useful to identify the **learning gaps**, understand students' learning levels as they return to school. Simpler requirements; does not need pre-existing learning data.

**Three policy levers to accelerate learning recovery**

**LEVER 1:**
CONSOLIDATING THE CURRICULUM

**LEVER 2:**
EXTENDING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

**LEVER 3:**
IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF LEARNING

ENSURING TEACHERS ARE WELL-SUPPORTED

# URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED TO ACCELERATE LEARNING RECOVERY

We cannot afford permanent losses in learning, future earnings and wellbeing for this generation

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